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A few days passed and now we were making our way towards the north of Pakistan. I flew to Islamabad and the very next morning I was on the road to Peshawar. After short stops in many villages we were in the mountain passes heading to the Swat valley. The six hour journey provided us with a wider picture of the damage caused by the floods; factories were washed away, light poles uprooted, bridges broken and a usual sight of cars overturned in the water. Moreover, we were fortunate enough to be in contact with the military in the area that facilitated all our operations.

From the Malakand pass onwards we were escorted by military personnel to an American based camp. We were seated in helicopters and our aid was loaded by dedicated soldiers. Minutes later we were soaring high above the Himalayan ice capped mountains with a breath taking view of the valleys below decorated with pine trees and streams of water. We occasionally waved at groups of kids on hilltops waiting for something since they are isolated from everyone due to the badly destroyed roads. We stopped in many villages and were greeted with warmth and love. The next several days were spent visiting effected people and trying to help in whichever way possible.

However, a great danger the people from Arkot (a small village situated in Swat) faced was that new streams were making their way into the area destroying everything in the way. A small amount was given to hire bulldozers to create a barrier. The people were so grateful that they all walked me from one village to another in appreciation and upon my departure to Karachi the army general of Swat presented me with a glass medal, the shield of honor.

This trip was indeed very beneficial; Most of my courage was due to all your support as a Brisbane and Gold Coast community.

The last leg of this journey was to Sukkur. It brought back many memories since it was here where as a young boy I would attend the discourses of the great Saint Hajee Mohammed Farouq sahib rahmatullah alayh in the mid 90s. Sukkur is known as the city of Saints. It was ruled by Dhul Qarnain and inhabited by Mohammed bin Qasim,

The British built the world's largest barrage here on the Indus River. The Sukkur Barrage has **66** Gates. It controls one of the largest irrigation systems in the world. Construction of the bridge was started in 1923 and completed in January 1932. The 5,000 feet (1,500 m) long barrage is made of yellow stone and steel and can water nearly 10 million acres (40,000 km) of farmland through its seven large canals. Some of the canals are larger than the Suez Canal. Through Allah's mercy the city was saved by inches of overflow of the Indus River. Despite this narrow escape the villages around were not spared. I alongside some volunteers began to pack everyday groceries in packages for distribution.

The next morning two trucks set out after fajr in different directions for distribution. Our truck was heading for Shikarpur. The road was closed and it meant sitting several hours in the heat on the side of the road. When we finally got going we realized the delay was because of several Nato trucks set alight by locals. The fire was intense, we reached the camps and alhamdulillah hundreds of needy people received aid in a very

organized manner. Besides the parcels cash was also handed out to many handicapped victims. This trip was completed with leading the Friday Jummah prayers at an old but grand Masjid at the side of the Indus River.

As a Muslim aid helper I realized how many non Muslims dedicated their time and efforts for this noble course from around the world. It amazed me how we all can unite in the face of adversities. As an Imam and religious leader I always encourage my community to be charitable beyond creed race or religion.

As a final word I would like to say, Pakistan faced a series of challenges since its inception and every time it overpowered all its dilemmas by dint of its resilient, brave and hard working people. Whether it was the re-settlement in 1947, or the war in 1965 or the earthquake in 2005, the brave nation countered the challenges successfully. Pakistani bravery is legendary. The people of Pakistan know how to re-construct hopes and create smiles on the faces of the distressed.

The rescue and relief work has mostly been accomplished. What is most needed now is the rehabilitation of the nation. The winter is approaching and they need proper shelters. I wish to begin few projects in this regard and re visit in January to monitor all progress. I would love to thank the community who so generously donated. I also thank M.C.F that I represented.

I urge everyone to see the full footage of all the operations now available on Islam TV.

Jazakaumullahu khairan.
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